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Morse paves way to make comeback as U.S. senator

By JIM MANN

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WASHINGTON — Lyndon Johnson went there to buy a good Devon bull. The late Drew Pearson went there often to swap hay, calves and political stores.

But those times are gone; and now former Oregon senator and cattle breeder Wayne L. Morse is selling the farm he has worked near the western Montgomery County town of Poolesville for the past 25 years.

He says he will now spend about 90 per cent of his time in Oregon, although he will maintain an apartment at the Watergate as a base of operations here.

At the age of 70, the first and foremost congressional critic of the Vietnam war announced last week in Eugene, Ore., he will enter the race for the Senate, where he served for 24 years before losing his seat in 1968.

He is meeting with potential financial supporters and drawing up a campaign budget, and he says the chances are "seven in ten" he will run in 1972 against Republican Sen. Mark Hatfield.

A reporter who made an unexpected visit to the farm recently found Morse dressed in faded dungarees, brown cowboy boots and an old shirt. With his bushy eyebrows, white hair and light white moustache, he looked very much like a David Levine caricature of a "state-man-turned hippie."

He can still draw out a story or speech longer than even Hubert Humphrey. And so, for more than four hours — while sweeping out his cottages, showing off his cattle and caring for a sick calf — Morse interwove anecdotes about his farm with stories about his days in the Senate.

There at the farm, about which Morse is partic-

ularly passionate: His Devon cows and the Vietnam war. He talks about both in the same senatorial rhetoric. (If this calf were to die, Wayne Morse declaims, it would be "a great tragedy.")

No surprises

Even in the serenity of his Poolesville surroundings, Morse can still make the war thousands of miles away seem as real as the cattle nearby.

The Pentagon Papers, Morse says, produced "nothing that surprised me. I know the State Department, I know the Pentagon."

"The war started when Eisenhower and Nixon and Dulles announced their containment policy of Asia. A lot of people think they had nothing to do with the war. They hatched the war."

The record shows that in 1954, Morse announced the United States was "in great danger of being catapulted into the Indochinese war."

Morse's voice rises. "They wanted war in Indochina. They did everything to stir one up. Where did Diem come from? We set him up in office and we militarized him."

Morse is firmly convinced that John F. Kennedy would have gotten the country out of Vietnam, because one day in November of 1963, Kennedy told Morse he was commissioning an "intense review" of the country's Vietnam policy.

"I kept talking to him (that day) about the effect of our policies, and Kennedy kept saying, 'that's not my intention,'" Morse recalls.

"I made all my points, I told him he was continuing the Eisenhower policy. He said he was de-emphasizing the military policy — that was the time when they were de-emphasizing the military. I said, 'Mr. Presi-

dent, there's just one way to de-emphasize the military in Vietnam and that's to eliminate it.' He said, 'I'm far from convinced you're wrong.'"

'They' did it

Ten days after the meeting, Kennedy was assassinated, and Morse says any evidence of an "intense study" of Vietnam policy by the Kennedy administration is probably under lock and key with the Kennedy library papers.

As for fellow cattle breeder Lyndon Johnson, Morse believes he was "deceived" about Vietnam in the early stages of his administration. "But they turned him into a deceiver himself," he said.

And who are "they?" Morse is asked. "The Rostows, the Bundys, the Joint Chiefs, the CIA, the whole crowd."

In August of 1964, when the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, sponsored by Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., passed the Senate, 88 to 2, the two dissenters were Morse and Sen. Ernest Gruening, D-Alaska. The record shows Morse characterized the United States as the "provocateur" in the Tonkin incident, saying, "we have been making covert war in Southeast Asia for some time, instead of seeking to keep the peace."

When Johnson escalated the war, Morse escalated his verbal attacks on the country's policies. He acknowledges now that he became known in the Senate as the "five o'clock shadow" because of the frequency with which he rose on the Senate floor late in the afternoon to berate the war policy.

Did Johnson ever rebuke Morse for his opposition? "No," replies Morse. "He knew his men. The basis on which we operated was complete frankness. I never hesitated to tell the President what I thought."

But that was then, and this is now — on the farm.

He is asking \$2,000 an acre for the farm, which has two small spring-fed ponds on it.

Some for Oregon

He is also selling most of the 105 head of Devon cattle on the farm, although he has the best in a rented barn across

the road. Out in Oregon, he says, he will rent another farm near his home in Eugene and will keep another 35 Devon there.

Morse will also maintain a small apartment at the Watergate Downtown as a base for law work here. He seemed somewhat embarrassed about living in such an establishment symbol, but explained it was close to the Senate and he had bought the apartment before the building was constructed.

The cottage at Morse's farm, fashioned out of an old milking barn and hen house, is filled with simple old wood furniture. The walls are covered with banners and penants from the fairs and cattle shows he has won. The Maryland and Oregon State fairs, the Montgomery County fair. On one wall is an old, touristy sportsman's map of Oregon.

When he began to give speeches over and over again on the Senate floor, he recalls a lot of people asked why.

"It's because I was a teacher. (He was a law professor at the University of Oregon.) A teacher knows the value of repetition and the capacity of his class. And it takes speeches four or five times a week to raise doubts in the mind of a United States Senator."

Of his loss to Sen. Robert Packwood, R-Ore., Morse asserts, "the war beat me. I refused to honor Johnson's policies... the Senate was hawkish in 1968. Why shouldn't the people of Oregon be?" There is an element of pathos to a senator who has lost office — like that of an athlete who has lost his legs — but Morse out of office has managed to be

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